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**Indiana's largest physician membership organization welcomes congressman, votes to support new prescribing rules – and more**

INDIANAPOLIS – The 164<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA) had a distinguished beginning Sept. 20 with a visit from U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, Republican from Indiana's 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Rep. Rokita advised delegates of the 7,900-member physician organization about the newly drafted American Health Care Reform Act, released to the public at a Washington, D.C., press conference days earlier. The ISMA convention was the first time any member of the drafting committee discussed the bill in length.

ISMA delegates expressed appreciation to Rep. Rokita for bringing details of the new bill *first* to Indiana physicians. As a result, the assembly voted to adopt Resolution 13-47 to supplement ISMA policy adopted in 2009, when the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was under consideration in Congress. The ISMA's new resolution, which contains similar ideas to the congressional bill, includes recommendations like replacing the individual mandate in the ACA with a refundable tax credit, repealing the employer mandate and expanding funding for medical schools and residency programs.

ISMA House of Delegates Speaker John Wernert, M.D. said, "The swift action of our House of Delegates to pass a new resolution on health care reform was surprising. The fact that Rep. Rokita flew back from Washington to address our convention was an honor. It's obvious he recognized the ideal opportunity to introduce a new health care bill before an audience of the state's physicians."

At the annual convention of the 7,900-member organization, held Sept. 20-22 in Indianapolis, physician delegates discussed and debated 47 resolutions submitted by their colleagues and subsidiary county societies around the state. Each resolution presented an issue of concern to doctors, and asked the ISMA to set policy or take action on that issue.

**Addressing the state's problems**

During the convention, delegates also voted to help stem the tide of prescription drug abuse in their communities. They chose to endorse emergency rules addressing responsible

opioid prescribing being developed as a collaboration between the ISMA and the Office of the Indiana Attorney General. The Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force is responding to create emergency prescribing rules by Nov. 1 of this year to set appropriate standards for physicians and other health care professionals who write controlled substance prescriptions for chronic, non-cancer pain. The task force and ISMA members remain engaged and continue working with the Medical Licensing Board of Indiana to develop concepts for final prescribing rules, which are due next year.

The ISMA delegates also voted to approve concepts presented in a “Prescribers Toolkit,” which the task force and its subcommittee on education are preparing. “The toolkit provides physicians with much-needed practical resources on controlled substance prescribing,” said Deborah McMahan, M.D., an ISMA member from Fort Wayne and head of the education subcommittee.

Out of concern for future generations of Hoosiers, ISMA delegates approved a resolution encouraging education of physicians on prevention, screening and counseling of pregnant women for the legal and illegal use of prescription medications and other substances potentially harmful to them and their unborn children. The resolution supports medical care, rather than criminalization for pregnant substance users.

Several resolutions focus on public health concerns of children. At the final Sunday session of convention, delegates debated policy pertaining to heading of a soccer ball by young players. Noting that formal training in heading the soccer ball does not usually begin before age 15 in Europe, neurologists Robert Flint, M.D., and Thomas Vidic, M.D., said in their resolution, “There is radiological evidence consistent with chronic traumatic brain injury in young, asymptomatic professional soccer players – with no known history of concussion – at a mean age of 19 years and mean duration of competition of 13 years.”

In the by players not in an organized league, as in high school, and encourages appropriate training in heading plus continued investigation into its potential consequences.

Established in 1849, the ISMA has worked in the public, private and governmental sectors since its inception – promoting sound health care policy and supporting education for physicians and their office staffs.

*Editor’s note: Please visit [www.ismanet.org/convention/2013/HODlist13.pdf](http://www.ismanet.org/convention/2013/HODlist13.pdf) to see the list of names of physicians from your area serving as delegates to the ISMA House of Delegates for the 164<sup>th</sup> ISMA Annual Convention.*

*Find the resolutions discussed here as well as photos and additional information about the convention at [www.ismanet.org/Convention/2013/resolutions](http://www.ismanet.org/Convention/2013/resolutions).*